

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### Van-Packer Co

#### Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center

#### Van Packer Company Sees Space Concerns Go Up In Smoke

**Client Profile:**

Van Packer Company, established in 1944, is a manufacturer of prefabricated double-walled stainless steel and concrete refractory commercial chimneys, chimney components, and engine exhaust systems. Located in Buda, Illinois, the company employs less than 50 people.

**Situation:**

Van Packer's manufacturing operations are housed in approximately 83,000 square feet of space in several buildings, some of which are 150 years old. Three long-standing product lines are made at the location; a fourth is scheduled to enter production before the end of 2002. When it added a double-walled stainless steel line in 1986, sales of the company's core product--a high temperature acid resistant concrete refractory chimney--decreased. The company wanted to put more emphasis on rebuilding the refractory line business by adding new equipment and improving manufacturability. However, the layout of the facility wouldn't support the required machine upgrades or the addition of a new product line. Van Packer called the Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center (IMEC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

**Solution:**

IMEC created an "as is" AutoCAD computerized layout of Van Packer's existing facility, including a detailed baseline drawing of the entire building complex and equipment, column locations, main doors, overhead doors, dock areas, aisle spaces, and utility sources. This interactive process involved plant floor employees working side-by-side with IMEC process optimization specialists to identify change options along the way. The solution set offered by the project team included moving equipment, making physical changes to reduce product travel distance, and relocating loading docks. IMEC also suggested Van Packer consider building a new facility to meet the company's planned growth. In a two-phase implementation, the company is making necessary changes to its physical layout to support the refractory and new product lines. Company leadership will determine whether to build the new facility at a later date.

**Results:**

Revised plant layout to incorporate new production line.  
Upgraded equipment.

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

Anticipating increased sales of nearly \$1 million.  
Saving \$200,000 in labor costs.

**Testimonial:**

"Other consultants we've used didn't get their hands dirty and really look at how things work in our facility. That's what I like about the Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center. They don't just tell us what to do... they get our people involved and work directly with us to actually make the improvements."

Chris Schulz, President